

MIDWEST DIGEST

1,000 Hogs Believed To Be Lost In Barn Fire

IRROQUOIS (AP) — The Beadle County emergency manager estimates about 1,000 hogs have perished in a fire in a confinement barn at the Crow Creek Colony.
Tom Moeding says the fire that broke out Monday afternoon destroyed half of the L-shaped building and killed the hogs penned there. A fire wall saved the other half of the building, and Moeding says hogs in that section are believed to be OK.
The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Deputies Investigate Mt. Rushmore Shooting

KEYSTONE (AP) — Pennington County sheriff's deputies are investigating a shooting at home near Mount Rushmore National Monument that injured one person.
A release from the sheriff's office says the shooting was reported about 1:30 p.m. Monday at a home in Keystone, just a few miles from the monument.
The release says one person was taken to a hospital. Authorities have not released that person's name or condition.

Iowa Man Wanted In Tire Iron Beating Death

COUNCIL BLUFFS, Iowa (AP) — An arrest warrant has been issued for a Council Bluffs man in the tire-iron beating of two Nebraska men, one of whom died from his injuries.
Council Bluffs police say the warrant charges 20-year-old Chad Fortner with first-degree murder and other serious charges.
The charges stem from an attack Saturday night that resulted in the death of 28-year-old Alejandro Sanchez, and severe injuries to Yair Solis-Marín, both of Omaha, Neb.
Officials say Sanchez and Solis-Marín went to a home in Council Bluffs Saturday night to see an unidentified woman.
The woman says when Sanchez allegedly assaulted her, two men and a woman drove up. One of the men — later identified as Fortner — allegedly struck Sanchez in several times in the head with a tire iron before turning on Solis-Marín.

Texas Man Accused Of Punching SD Trooper

PIERRE (AP) — A Texas man faces charges after allegedly punching a South Dakota trooper three times during a traffic stop.
Court documents say 66-year-old Chester Strickland, of Clarendon, Texas, was charged in Hughes County with aggravated assault against an officer, obstructing a police officer and carrying a weapon without a permit. He's been released on \$10,000 bond.
Court documents say trooper Deanna Gorman tried to arrest Strickland after a traffic stop north of Pierre Thursday night and was punched twice in the face. The filings say the 31-year-old Gorman pulled her gun and told Strickland to put his hands up, but was punched again while trying to cuff him.

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Suit Challenging Neb. Flag Law Dropped

BY MARGERY BECK
Associated Press Writer

PAPILLION, Neb. (AP) — Family members of a fallen U.S. soldier expressed disappointment Monday after prosecutors and protesters from Kansas-based Westboro Baptist Church reached a deal that will keep both sides out of court over actions stemming from a church member's 2007 protest of the serviceman's funeral.
The 11th-hour deal was signed Monday, the same day Shirley Phelps-Roper's trial was to begin on charges of disturbing the peace and negligent child abuse. Those charges will be dismissed in exchange for Phelps-Roper, 52, dropping a federal lawsuit against Nebraska authorities accusing them of malicious prosecution.
As part of the deal pending a judge's expected Aug. 31 approval, Phelps-Roper also agreed to remove Sarpy County Attorney Lee Polikoff from a separate lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the state's funeral protest law. Defendants in that ongoing federal suit include Republican Gov. Dave Heineman and state Attorney General Jon Bruning.

But family members and friends of the fallen Bellevue soldier say the deal leaves them out in the cold.
"I came here today to see some justice done. This isn't right," said Randy Chaney, 44, the brother of Petty Officer 1st Class Jeffrey Chaney, who was 35 when he was killed in 2007 by a roadside bomb in Iraq.

It was outside the National Guardsman's funeral in the Omaha suburb of Bellevue that Phelps-Roper allowed her 10-year-old son to stand on an American flag in protest, while she wore a flag as a skirt that dragged on the ground. Police arrested her on suspicion of violating a state flag-mutilation law, as well as child abuse and disturbing the peace charges.
Chaney said he had hoped the justice system would constrain the group's ability to bring children to such protests.
"She's putting her children in danger," he said.

Jeff Chaney's mother, Connie Chaney, said she was disappointed with the deal and that consideration should have been given to her and other families attending soldiers' funerals who have had to encounter signs by Westboro members proclaiming "Thank God

for dead soldiers" and "Thank God for IEDs."
"They're catching people at the most vulnerable time they can get them," Connie Chaney said.

Members of Westboro Baptist Church, based in Topeka, Kan., travel the country protesting at soldiers' funerals because they believe U.S. troop deaths are punishment for the nation's tolerance of homosexuality. Members often trample on, wear and display the American flag upside-down as part of their protests.

Phelps-Roper, an attorney for and lifelong member of Westboro Baptist Church and mother of 11, has maintained the charges against her were not warranted because she was exercising her right to free speech and had been in compliance with a Bellevue permit for the protest. She had pleaded not guilty and twice unsuccessfully asked for the case to be dismissed.

Under the terms of the deal, Phelps-Roper agreed to drop a federal lawsuit against Nebraska authorities related to her 2007 arrest.

"Nobody is admitting any wrongdoing here," said Omaha attorney Bassel El-Kasaby, who represents Phelps-Roper.

Sioux Falls Police Arrest 3 In Case Of Man's Body Found In Burned Car

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Sioux Falls police on Monday identified a man found dead in a burning car over the weekend and arrested three people in connection with his death.
Curtis Weddell, 31, of the Wagner area, was arrested on suspicion of the second-degree murder of 28-year-old Rafael Morales of Sioux Falls, police said hours after issuing arrest warrants in the case. Sioux Falls residents Morgan Black Eagle, 19, and Stephanie Vargas, 34, were arrested on suspicion of misprison of a felony, which involves knowing a felony was committed but not reporting it.
Police said an autopsy had been done but it didn't reveal Morales' cause of death.

A passer-by reported the car engulfed in flames about 4 a.m. Saturday. The body was found after the fire was put out.

"My first reaction was actually shock," said Lynn Vanlaar, who lives across the street from the scene. "I mean, it's not too often, no matter where you live, that you see a car going up in flames in your neighborhood."

Residents said they live in an otherwise quiet neighborhood.
"It has to be somebody that doesn't live anywhere around here, because the people in this neighborhood are fantastic," Vanlaar said.

Neb. Council To Weigh Cost Of Immigration Law

FREMONT, Neb. (AP) — The Fremont City Council will be asked to spend \$750,000 to defend the city's ban on hiring and renting to illegal immigrants when it considers its 2011 budget next week.

City Clerk Kim Volk confirmed Monday that the allocation would be included in the budget scheduled for a first reading at the council's Aug. 31 meeting.

The city faces federal lawsuits from two groups who say the voter-approved ordinance is discriminatory. The council has voted to suspend the ban until the lawsuits are settled.

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e-mail: bobeverhart@yahoo.com
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